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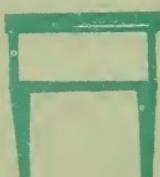
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Used Sewing Machines —A Good Buy



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Used Sewing Machines —A Good Buy

By Virginia Ogilvy, Clothing Specialist

You're in the market for a sewing machine, but your budget won't stretch to cover the cost of a new one. Or perhaps your daughter is beginning to sew at school. Maybe you just need a simple machine for the family mending.

Whatever your reasons—you're shopping for a used sewing machine and this booklet will help you make the best selection possible.

WHERE CAN YOU BUY A USED SEWING MACHINE?

- Retail stores sell both new and reclaimed or trade-in machines.
- Second hand stores.
- Individuals—found through want ads, bulletin board notices, and garage sales.
- Auctions.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE IF A USED MACHINE IS WORTH ITS SELLING PRICE?

Consider these factors:

- Does it meet your sewing needs?
- What condition is it in?
- Is the price right for your pocketbook, as well as your needs?
- Will it be difficult to get parts such as extra bobbins and needles of correct size? Remember, few long shuttle bobbin machines are made today. The round bobbin machine is usually preferred and probably a newer machine.

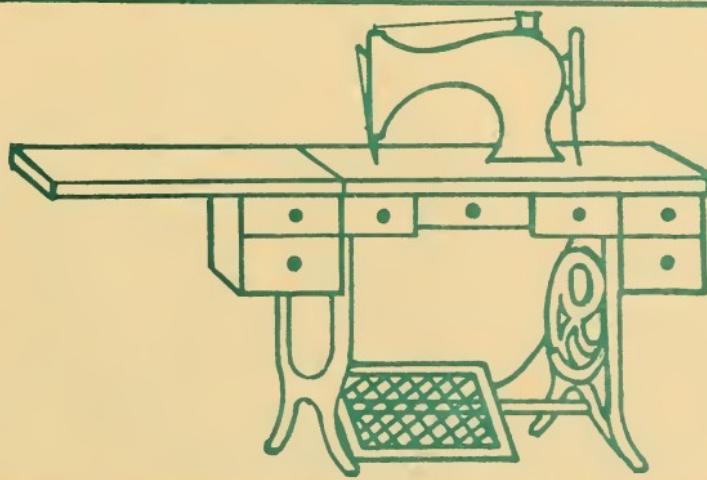
An established local business with a reputation of satisfied customers is a good choice. Dealers' machines are reconditioned and should carry a warranty of service.

Buying from an individual involves the greatest risk. The price might be low because the buyer must take the sewing machine "as is."

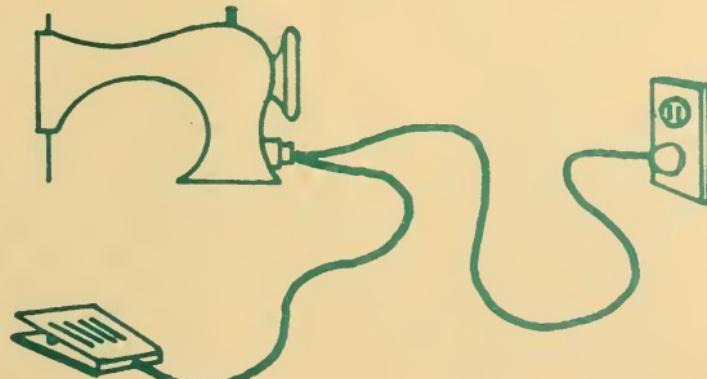
WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A USED SEWING MACHINE?

Kinds of Sewing Machines

- **Treadle**—This is an older machine and is probably the least expensive. It is simple to clean and operate. Parts might be difficult to get.



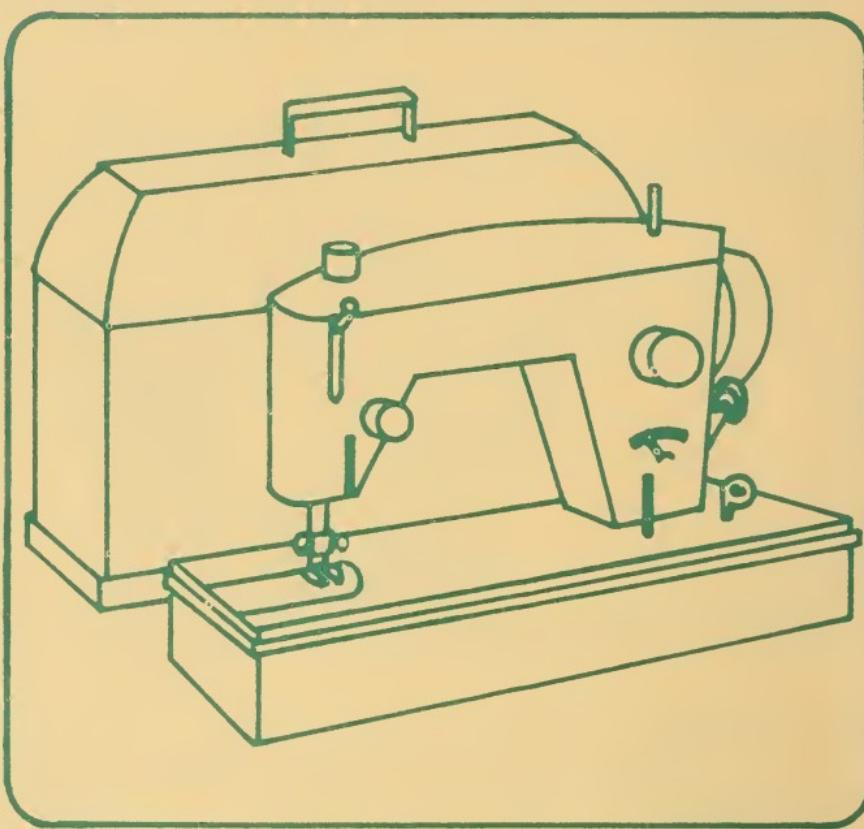
- **Electric**—This is a more expensive machine to purchase, but requires a source of electric power.



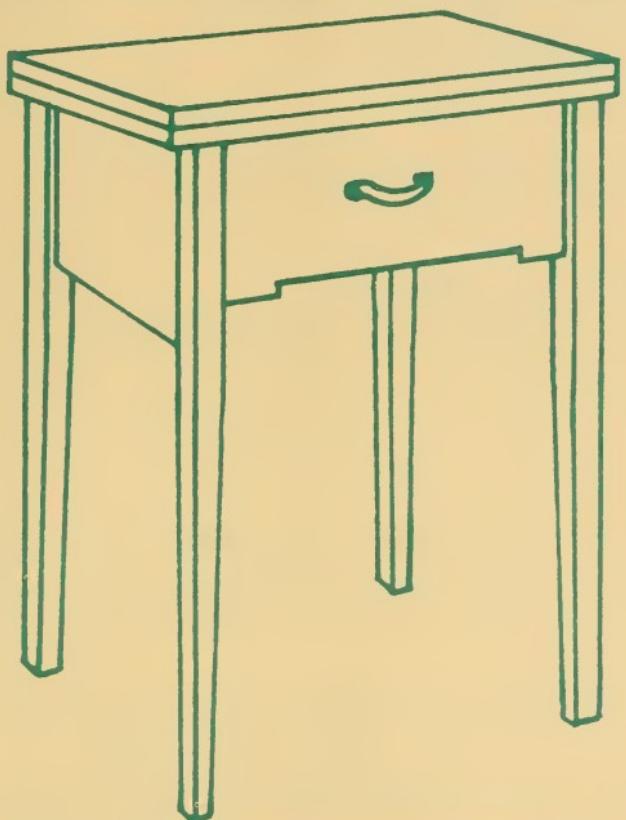
Portable or Cabinet Styles

This choice depends upon available space, how often you need to move it, your budget, and the amount of sewing you will do.

- **Portable**—This machine requires little storage space and can be moved about easily. As some portables are quite heavy, make sure you can handle the weight and use the carrying case conveniently. A working space at the right height is necessary for operating your portable properly.

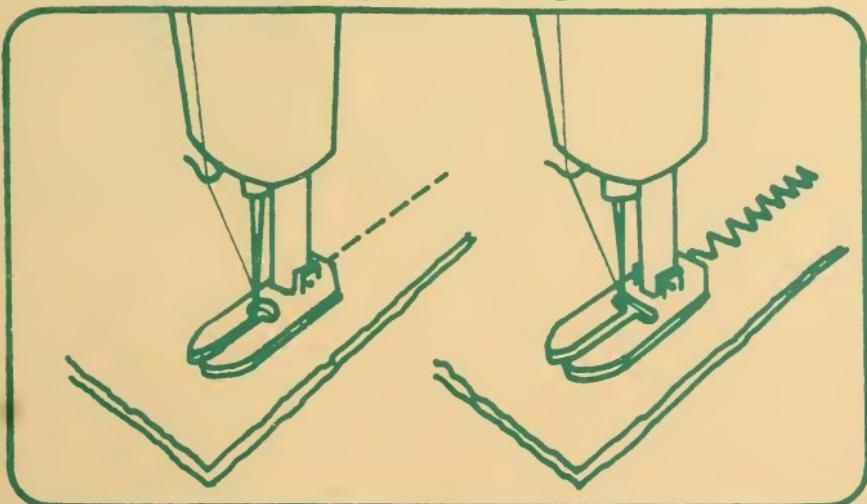


- **Cabinet**—This machine is often more expensive because you are also purchasing a piece of furniture. Cabinets come in a variety of decorative styles. Make sure there is space for this type of machine if you live in a small home or apartment. Cabinet machines have the advantage of always being ready to use.



Kinds of Stitch

- **Straight Stitch**—This machine is good for the beginner and one who sews only occasionally. A great deal of home sewing can be done on a straight stitch machine.
- **Zigzag Stitch**—This machine is more expensive. However, it is good for sewing stretch fabrics and knits, blind hemming, overcasting seams, mending and decorative stitches, as well as straight stitching.



HAS THE MACHINE BEEN WELL CARED FOR?

- Are there any dents or scratches?
- Are any parts missing? Check carefully.
- Does it show signs of wear?

IS THE MACHINE IN GOOD OPERATING CONDITION?

Before you buy any machine, try it out and make sure that it sews satisfactorily. Take some fabric and thread with you when you go to look over a machine. Check out these important points:

- Thread the top and bobbin. Is it easy to thread? Is the bobbin easy to remove and set in place?
- Is the knee or foot control comfortable for you to use and easy to regulate?
- Does the machine stitch straight seams and around curves, with a good stitch regardless of length (short or long) or type (straight, zig-zag, or decorative)?
- Is the machine easy to handle?
- Can you stitch slowly as well as fast?
- If there is a light, is it where you need it?
- Does it run smoothly without unnecessary vibration or noise?
- If there are attachments, are they easy to use?
- Is it easy to make adjustments in tension, length of stitch, presser foot pressure?
- Is electrical wiring in good condition, not bare with wires showing? Is it flexible?
- Are belts or chain belts in good condition, not worn, frayed, or loose?

WHAT IS A RECONDITIONED MACHINE?

Many people trade in their old sewing machines for newer, fancier models. The dealer then reconditions these machines by:

- Checking functional parts for operation.
- Replacing missing or worn parts.
- Making necessary adjustments or repairs.
- Cleaning inside and out.
- Testing for satisfactory condition before issuing his service warranty.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU CONSIDER?

- Does an instruction book come with the machine?
- Are lessons in the use of the machine available? What do they cost?
- Do you know the total purchase price of your machine? If you are not paying cash, remember it will include interest charges. Don't allow special offers to influence or tempt you.
- Is service convenient in your area?
- Are parts readily available when you need them?

Study the facts, check out the machine before you buy, make sure it suits your needs. You'll get a better bargain and more years of use from your machine, if you do.



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